

“Welfare to Work” Project

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California's Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) has teamed up with the Community College Foundation (CCF) and its partner, the Cal-Works program, to sponsor a project that provides welfare recipients with real-world training and experience with the goal of giving both the participants and their communities an economic boost.

Under the “Welfare to Work” project, individuals currently on welfare are trained at Smog Check Referee Centers. They perform various automotive repair shop functions, including emissions inspection and maintenance tasks. This knowledge and experience will prepare them for new career opportunities and put them on the road toward financial independence.

CCF provides personnel, management, and fiscal oversight for the program, while BAR provides the technical direction, to ensure that the program meets federal and state requirements. Referees train the participants, who then cycle into the public workforce in three-month intervals. In all, there are more than 35 Smog Check Referee Centers located at Community Colleges and commercial sites statewide.

Before being admitted to the program, participants must show that they possess the ability to read, write, interpret, and understand basic records and correspondence without difficulty, as well as apply practical mathematics, make simple calculations, and apply basic problem-solving methods.

The program includes a ten-week, 400-hour, hands-on training program consisting of five one-week modules followed by one combined module (modules six through ten). Each module builds on the prior lesson and participants must pass final tests after completing each module. Participants begin with a module entitled *Office Work*, then move on to the *Safety* module, then to the *Equipment Maintenance and Use* module, *Vehicle Inspection* module, and *Emissions Diagnostics* module. After completing the fifth module, participants begin a five-week *Mentoring* module in which they train incoming candidates in the first five modules.

The objective of the “Welfare to Work” project is to provide participants with the knowledge and training necessary to achieve their goals to become financially self sufficient and to take advantage of many new career opportunities. Some of the possible career paths include: General Office Assistant; Auto Technician Apprentice; Auto Parts Assistant; and General Auto Repair Assistant. With additional training at a community college and/or with additional experience, possible career opportunities expand to include Smog Check Basic Area Technician, or Advanced Emission Specialist Technician.

For more information about this program, contact the Work Experience Program Coordinator, Community College Foundation, at (916) 418-5200.

The “Welfare to Work” Project provides welfare recipients with practical training and experience to give participants and their communities an economic boost.